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The Sure Foundation:

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE GRAND MASTER OF MASONS
AND THE DISTRICT LODGE OF PRINCE EDWARD,

at Bellefleur
December 27th 1859

BR. THE REV. JAMES A. PRESTON, M. A.,
PAST MASTER,
INCUMBENT OF STIRLING, AND DISTRICT GRAND CHAPLAIN.

HAMILTON:

PRINTED AT THE "SPECTATOR" OFFICE, COURT-HOUSE SQUARE.

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TO COL. WILLIAM MERCER WILSON,
THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER OF MASONS IN AND
THROUGHOUT CANADA,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED, AS A SMALL TRIBUTE OF THE
RESPECT AND ESTEEM OF

THE AUTHOR.

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The Sure Foundation.

I. CORINTHIANS, III. 10.—“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

THE Church of Christ is compared in Holy Scripture to a building of which He is the “chief corner stone.”* His followers are likened to “lively” or living stones who compose the building, which, “fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.”† The foundations of this spiritual temple are “the apostles and prophets,”—the realities of the New Testament ratifying and maturing the predictions of the Old Covenant.

The apostle in the chapter from which the text is taken, is speaking of the foundation that he had himself laid. He affirms that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.” This foundation was Jesus Christ—the author and founder of the Christian religion—the introducer of the Gospel of Peace—the only sure Rock upon which man may build his hopes of immortality. The apostle also declares that men should “take heed” as to the superstructure they rear upon this foundation, for a fiery trial would manifest the character and permanency of the work; and, that whether the building was ornamented with “gold and silver and precious stones,”‡ or presented only the miserable aspect of

* Ephes. ii. 20,

† Ephes. ii. 21.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

“wood, hay and stubble,” every man’s work should be made manifest, and the great day of final account should declare it.

The text presents to our notice the following ground for reflection :—

- I. The guidance of the apostle in his work.
- II. The character of the foundation that he laid.
- III. The caution given to those who should build.

From these considerations, viewed in their order, I purpose in conclusion, to draw practical and profitable lessons, imploring the blessing of the Most High upon our meditations, that none may go “empty away.”

I. We are to notice, first, the guidance of the Apostle in his work.

If we compare the accounts that the Scriptures relate of the character of St. Paul after his conversion, with the history given to us of him, when, as “Saul of Tarsus,” he madly persecuted the early followers of Christ, we shall find that the latter accounts speak of one who, proud and defiant, gloried in the zeal with which he persecuted the Church ; while, from the former narrative, we shall draw information, telling us of one whose zeal, as lasting as before, was tempered with discretion ; of one who knew and felt his unworthiness as a man, and ascribed all the glory and success and sufficiency of his labors to the power of the Spirit and to the grace of God. For example, he alludes in one of his epistles to a period in his life, when lifted far above the abodes of human kind, his eye feasted on glorious sights—his ear heard sounds of rapture unheard

by mortals, but, lest he should be exalted above measure, there was given him "a thorn in the flesh," and the messenger of satan was permitted to "buffet" him; and when he had thrice besought the Lord for this, a voice from heaven spake words that brought a full consolation to his heart: "My *grace* is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." *

Nevertheless, it was his practice, while humbling himself before the Almighty, to magnify his office and apostleship, and confidently to boast, that by means of the abundance of the grace given unto him, he could hope that his labor would not be in vain, while he preached "among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." †

"By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace that was bestowed on me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." ‡

The man was constantly being subdued—the apostle exalted—his nature and his flesh humbled—his calling and election glorified; as a man he proclaimed himself "the chief of sinners"—as a minister of Christ he declared himself to be "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." §

It was the grace of God then, my brethren, which, vouchsafed to him in overflowing measure, enabled this "wise master-builder" to lay a sure foundation upon which future generations for all time to come might rear a spiritual temple—it was this grace that sustained him amid persecutions which caused the first heralds of the cross, to be set forth as "a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men"||—it was this grace and strength of God's Holy

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

† Eph. iii. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

§ 2 Cor. xi. 5.

|| 1 Cor. iv. 9.

Spirit that enabled him to exclaim with exulting confidence, when he was a prisoner in prospect of martyrdom : "I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." *

The Comforter who was sent to guide the companions of our Saviour "into all truth," † was St. Paul's instructor and consolation also. The Spirit that descended upon the first messengers of the gospel, on the day of Pentecost, rested also upon this devoted follower of his master—the foundation of "the apostles and prophets," ‡ had a firm support in this earnest and holy apostle, who died for his Lord ; and the temple of God, reared heavenward by many holy hands, had not a more skilful and a wiser "master-builder than he who wrote to the Corinthian converts according to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation." §

II. In the second place, we are to consider the character of the foundation laid by the apostle.

There were at Corinth, about the period of the apostle's writing to Corinthians, false teachers who had corrupted the faith. The apostle, in the chapter which contains the text, exposes their errors, and shews that they were not building aright upon the foundation he had laid, but were raising a superstructure thereupon which was void of the comeliness and beauty that should adorn the Christian temple.

He, however, forbears to mention these false teachers by name, but calls the attention of the Corinthian converts to the fact, that want of union must weaken the cause of Christianity, and division into sects and parties, even with

* 2 Tim iv. 7, 8. † John xvi. 13. ‡ Eph. ii. 20. § 1 Cor. iii. 10.

apostolic leaders, would cause confusion in the Church. "While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?"*

For who were Paul and Apollos? is his argument. Not rulers, but teachers, ministers, servants, for Christ's sake; and what were their labors but the sowing of the good seed of the word of God, the planting and watering of the graces of the Holy Spirit, awaiting the blessing of God "that giveth the increase."†

He that planted and he that watered were *one*; in themselves nothing; *one* in intention, *one* in aim, with unity of purpose and harmony of doctrine; servants of "one Lord," upholding and proclaiming "one faith," and admitting converts into the Christian Church by "one baptism."

They were "fellow-laborers"‡ with God; the Christians at Corinth were "God's husbandry"† and "God's building,"‡ and the foundation of the whole structure was the only one that could be laid—"Jesus Christ."§

Upon this sure foundation several builders had been employed in erecting a spiritual temple. This was the only foundation that could be laid to the glory of God and for the salvation of men—"the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."|| This foundation had been laid of old by the counsel and purpose of Jehovah; it had been built upon by the wise and good in every age of the world. The fathers of the old dispensation walked and wrought by faith, and with the eye of faith saw the temple of their security rise. The apostles and witnesses of the new covenant beheld "the life,"¶ which "was as the light of men"¶ illumine their labors, and rejoiced that the prophecy

* 1 Cor. iii. 4.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 11.

† 1 Cor. iii. 7.

|| Eph. ii. 20.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 9.

¶ John i. 4.

was fulfilled : "Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation."*

The hope and confidence of Christians, "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious;"† "He came unto his own, and his own received Him not."‡ He bare the sins of the whole world upon the tree.¶ He has "brought life and immortality to light by the gospel."§ The faith upon which we, as Christians, build, is "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," and as the temple of God is built up toward heaven, it rises in proportion just and true, and extends so as to embrace all the families of the earth, and will so rise and so extend till all nations shall flow into it, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."¶

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the head stone in the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."**

In the third place, we are to consider, my brethren, the caution the apostle gave to those who should build, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."††

How necessary was this caution, let all events that have occurred since the Apostolic times testify ! Although the foundation is tried and sure, how many and how various the buildings erected on it—yea ! how different were these structures in the Apostles' own day ! Even then, the building was in some measure out of proportion, the pillars sometimes tottering, and the decorations defaced. Even then, upon this foundation were built an unstable fabric of

* Isaiah xxviii. 16.

† 1 Peter, ii. 24.

** Ps. cxviii, 22, 23.

† 1 Peter, ii. 4.

§ 2 Tim. i. 10.

†† 1 Cor. iii. 10.

‡ John i. 11.

¶ Isaiah xi. 9.

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hence invention and erroneous doctrine, and even then appeared the tawdry and spurious bedecking of abrogated ceremonies, and philosophical speculation, instead of the beauty and appropriateness of the grace and faith which distinguish the "building of God." *

Great cause was there for men to "take heed" when the building, which if erected with proper materials, would rise in loveliness and strength, might be deformed and weakened by base matter, and disfigured by the introduction of false architecture, that like the "wood, hay and stubble" † would not stand the fiery test, while they would tarnish "the gold and silver and precious stones" †—the pure doctrines and saving faith, and holy truths, which form the proper ornaments, and are the brightest lustre of "the Church of the living God—the pillar and the ground of truth." ‡

Great cause is there to "take heed," my brethren, that our faith be built upon the doctrines of the gospel—that each and all of us, called by the name of Christ, be fitted as living stones, each in his proper position, and that all complete, as far as may be, that glorious structure—the Church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." ||

Let every one of us "take heed" how he builds his own character, as a Christian and as a member of society, that walking "soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world" § and leaning all his life long upon the bosom of the Saviour that loves him, his faith may be that of Abraham, looking for his final rest and inheritance to "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." ¶

* 2 Cor. v. 1.

|| Ephs. i. 33.

† 1 Cor. iii. 12.

§ Titus ii. 12.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

¶ Heb. xi. 10.

But it is time that I should make some allusion to the object which has called us together to day.

This assembly of Free and Accepted Masons, has met in God's house, to begin with prayer and praise the celebration of the Festival of St. John the Evangelist—"the disciple whom Jesus loved."* Could any body of men be engaged in a more suitable or a holier employment? Here, my brethren let it be one prayer that we may cultivate the spirit of brotherly love so frequently and forcibly inculcated by the beloved disciple; calling to mind, what we should hold in everlasting remembrance:

"This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."†

Let me entreat your patience a few moments while I endeavour, under the same guidance which blessed the apostles work, to draw practical and profitable lessons from the words of the text.

This is not the time, nor is the pulpit the place to enter at any length into the description of the system of Free masonry. Let it suffice at present to say, that it is an established fact, controverted by comparatively few of the uninitiated world at present, that Masonry is founded on religion, and it would be useless to attempt the task of proving this to you who have shared in the mysteries of the craft; you know that the principles of the Order are the purest *that the heart can conceive*—that her designs are the most virtuous that *the hand can execute*.

If any doubt that Masonry teaches *brotherly love*, let him be assured that his doubts are vain, when he contemplates (as he may) thousands who range under the banners of Masonry, who in all respects but this are *strangers—strangers*

* John xiii. 23.

† 1 John, iv. 21.

in respect of nation and kindred, of language and blood—but in this respect *brethren of a mystic tie*.

This fact is so well described by a learned and reverend writer on the subject, who hails from one of the Grand Lodges of the neighbouring Union, that I cannot do better than quote some of his remarks: "Are you a Free and Accepted Mason? You have a home in every country, a friend and benefactor in every worthy brother, through the whole fraternity. Are you cast on the shores of a foreign land? The hand of a brother is then extended to alleviate your wants, to animate your sinking spirits or console your agonized mind. Do you meet an enemy in battle array? The token of a Mason converts him into a guardian angel. Is your life in jeopardy from any casualty? A brother is nerved for your assistance, and his own life jeopardized for your safety."*

Does any one doubt the willingness with which Masons afford *relief* to the distressed? I point with confidence to the Masonic institutions in the mother country, reared by the hands of the brethren, as monuments of the charity and benevolence which are the cardinal virtues of the system. Amongst these might be mentioned Masonic Institutions where Boys and Girls are educated, and the asylums for aged and indigent Free-masons. The benefits that such institutions are calculated to confer on mankind may in some measure be ascertained from the following extract from a letter written by an United States brother, who visited them. In describing one of his visits he writes: "My next journey was to the Royal Masonic Institute for boys. I am deeply indebted to Br. A. U. Thistleton, the very amiable Secretary of this Institution, for his attention in showing it to me and

* Rev. Salem Town—Speculative Masonry.

explaining its workings. To the credit of the managers, I must say, every thing is kept in superior order. The buildings are beautifully clean and comfortable. They are not large enough, but additions are going up which will afford ample room for present purposes. As to the pupils, I never saw a more intelligent or happy set of boys. * * *

In fact, the boy who gains admission here has a certain domicile—a home—until he is fully capable of taking care of himself; and if I am rightly informed, one of the best business men in the Bank of England, at this time, was educated in this establishment.”*

I point with confidence as an illustration of this Masonic duty, to the “relief” afforded by Masons to old age and infirmity, to the widow and the orphan, to the needy and the wretched. From information received from a brother, writing from London, England, we ascertain that the collection from private brethren, in aid of the girls and boys school, before alluded to, have amounted to £2,000 sterling for each institution; and that a like sum has been subscribed for the Royal Benevolent Institution, for aged Masons, and their widows. A Board of Benevolence dispenses monthly from £150 to £200 sterling, in temporary relief to the brethren, in sums varying from £5, to £100 sterling, altogether irrespective of large sums dispersed in relief through the private Lodges. † And I indulge the hope, that the project suggested to this Masonic province, by one of our subordinate Lodges, and for the carrying out of which, a competent Committee has been appointed by the Grand Master, may soon be a grand monument to the benevolence

* Vide “Voice of Masonry.”

† Letter from Br. Henry G. Warren, of London, England, dated London, June 8, 1859, addressed to Br. Robert Morris, G. M., Kentucky.

of Canadian Freemasons. I allude, of course, to the suggestion, that in Canada should be erected some Asylum or charitable institution, "that thus the world at large, unable indeed to penetrate the mysteries of Free-masonry, may have the evidence afforded by such an institution, that our profession is not an empty sound, but that every act of a true and sincere Free and Accepted Mason, is done in the name, and to the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe."

And "Truth" is one of the chief characteristics of the Masonic system. To be good and true, "is one of the first lessons taught in Masonry; whilst influenced by this principle, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown to Masons, and the heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing at each other's prosperity." *

"Faith" in God, "Hope" in immortality, and "Charity" to all men, and more especially to the brethren, are inscribed on the banners of Masonry, and with *Temperance* as the restraint upon his passions; with *Fortitude* as his safeguard against *fear on the one hand, and rashness on the other*; with *Prudence*, as the guide of his actions; and with *Justice* to govern all his dealings, what character shines with more brilliant light than that of "*a just and upright Free-mason.*"

Does any one object that we exalt Masonry to an equal position with Religion, or even superior to it? We answer a thousand times, no! Religion is the soul's concern; in every man's heart there is a monitor conscience, which dictates duties "to be done," and warns us what we are "not to do." Religion is from above. Masonry is a human institution, a handmaid of religion, a human instrument of inculcating divine precepts, a great instructor of moral

* "The Craftsman and Freemason's Guide."—MOORE.

duties. By appropriate emblems, Masonry teaches us our duty to God, our neighbours and ourselves. She assumes no greater rank; she clouds not her principles with the veil of secrecy, while she keeps secret the marks by which she preserves her privileges and distinguishes the brethren of her "mystic tie" from the uninitiated. The rest is patent to the world. Her secrets are valueless to those who are not Masons; her principles, great and invaluable as they are, are well and widely known. And where is the impropriety of Masonic secrets, if they extend no farther than I have stated? Has not the merchant secrets in business unknown to others? Has not the soldier his watch-word in battle to distinguish friend from foe? Have not parents and children, brothers and sisters, domestic privacy "with which a stranger doth not intermeddle?" And who will say that secrecy as to signs and tokens will attach a stigma to an institution patronised and presided over by kings and princes, sainted bishops, and the good and wise in every age; and who have with united voice declared that all the teaching of Masonry, whether inculcated by precept or example, and all her privileges and benefits, are founded upon and sanctioned by "the volume of the sacred law" of God.

This is the *foundation* you have laid; let every man "take heed" that as "a wise master-builder" he rear not upon it "wood and hay and stubble," but "gold and silver and precious stones." Brethren, this is "the will of God, that with well-doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As *free*, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the *brotherhood*. Fear God. Honor the king."*

Although no individual unworthiness can possibly cast

* Peter ii. 15-17.

censure upon the principles that regulate the system, nor tarnish the glory of Masonic teaching, yet my brethren, one unworthy member may detract from the usefulness of the whole body, establish the opinions of the prejudiced against the Order, and prevent many from ranging under your banners. Even as the Apostle thought it prudent in him to warn the Corinthian converts, that want of harmony and disunion were carnal and dangerous ; so let me say to you, having laid the foundation in equity, and having prepared the cement of brotherly love, see that the building be well proportioned and "fit for the master's use:" for, "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" *

Remember the sacred duties devolving upon you ; remember that your unworthiness may cause you to be regarded by the world without as a *club*, established, as they imagine, for questionable purposes, and let no Mason's profession be virtuous, while his practices are vicious. Remember your duties also to your families, while you are not forgetful of your duty as Masons, when *congregated* together. For "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." †

Let me admonish you in the words of the learned author of "Illustrations of Masonry," who says, "Let us mark our superiority and distinction among men, by the sincerity of our profession as Masons ; let us cultivate the moral virtues, and improve in all that is good and amiable ; let the Genius of Masonry preside over our conduct, and, under her sway, let us perform our part with becoming dignity ; let us preserve an elevation of understanding, a politeness of manner, and an evenness of temper ; let our recreations be innocent, and

* Ps. xi. 3.

† 1 Tim. v. 8.

pursued with moderation, and never let irregular indulgences lead to the subversion of our system, by impairing our faculties, or exposing our character to derision. In conformity to our precepts, as patterns worthy of imitation, let the respectability of our character be supported by the regularity of our conduct and the uniformity of our deportment; then, as citizens of the world, and friends to every clime, we shall be living examples of virtue and benevolence, equally zealous to merit, as to obtain universal approbation.”*

The ceremonies used in Masonry are not empty forms, without meaning; they foreshadow truths the most sublime. Does not every well-skilled brother know that he was at first shewn man guilty and degraded, wandering in darkness, and not knowing whither he was going; and was he not taught, symbolically, the chaos that reigned before the counsels of the God-Head created the orbs that roll in majesty and beauty in infinite space? Was he not taught by emblems the glories of creation, the gradual development of order and harmony from chaos and confusion, and the darkness and void of the primæval world before “God said, Let there be light, and there was light.”† And were you not *prepared* for the reception of *more light* by investigating the hidden mysteries of nature and science, and enabled to trace the workings of the Infinite even to His lofty throne? And having so learned, were you not taught in a most solemn and sublime manner the knowledge of yourself? Have you not learned the importance of the lesson, “Be thou faithful unto death,” and that in very deed death has no sting equal to that of falsehood and dishonor? “Mark well” these things; “take heed” unto them; so regulate your lives by the bright

* “Illustrations of Masonry,”—PRESTON—Book I, Section X.

† Genesis, i. 3.

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and illustrious examples of the "wise master-builders" who have wrought in the temples of old, and by *wisdom* in your counsels add *strength* to your work, and let *BEAUTY* adorn the fabric which you build upon the sure foundation. Ever remember that the hour approaches when your labors must cease; the head that devised work for the craft must be bowed in death; the heart that conceived the plans that ornament the building must cease to beat, and the hand, prompt to execute the design, be powerless to labor; and so live that you may never dread the approach of the inevitable foe, but trample the king of terrors beneath your feet, and in humble confidence raise your eyes to heaven, trusting in the merits of Him who is described by his beloved disciple, whose festival we commemorate to-day, as saying: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of the light;* and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.† All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."‡

As I have before said, Masonry possesses no empty forms; her ceremonies are all fraught with significance and substantiality; and although she is a "peculiar system," she is still "a system of morality;" and although she be "*veiled in allegory*" to the uninitiated and the unlearned, the wise and the skilful Mason sees clearly into the deep recesses of that truth which in Masonry is "*illustrated by symbols.*"

It has been well said by Hutchinson: "The members of our Society at this day, in the third stage of Masonry, confess

* Eph. v. 8.

† Eph. v. 11.

‡ Eph. v. 13.

themselves to be Christians ; the veil of the temple is rent, the builder is smitten, and we are raised from the tomb of transgression. The Master Mason represents a man under the Christian doctrine, saved from the grave of iniquity and raised to the faith of salvation."

And it has been well expressed in verse of Masonry :

"To works of Art her merit not confin'd,
She regulates the morals, squares the mind ;
Corrects with care the sallies of the soul,
And points the tide of passions where to roll !
On virtue's tablet marks her moral rule,
And forms her Lodge a universal school ;
Where Nature's mystic laws unfolded stand,
And sense and science join'd, go hand in hand."*

And, my brethren, while such glorious names shine on the scroll of Masonic history, as the wise and good of every age, it can be said, without fear of contradiction, that Masonry is an "ancient and honorable" institution. Let, then, none seek to remove "the ancient land-marks;" let all "take heed" that the honor of the institution remains unsullied. Look at the high and honorable bequests left you by St. Augustine, King Alfred the Great, Edward the Confessor, William of Wykeham and Sir Christopher Wren, with many others in olden time ; and learn by the example of the good, in modern as well as ancient times, who have by their stainless conduct as Masons raised Masonry to such an eminence, that in every age *monarchs themselves have been the promoters of the art; have not thought it derogatory from their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the trowel; have patronised its*

* "Masonic Ode," CUNNINGHAM. Vide "Preston's Illustrations of Masonry," edited by Oliver—American edition—Universal Masonic Library, vol 3. Appendix, Masonic Poetry.

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mysteries, and have even joined its assemblies. Who will venture to say that with such Patrons, and such Masters, the foundations of Freemasonry are not fixed and firm, and that upon those foundations the superstructure of Masonic good is not rising *perfect in its parts, and honorable to the builders.*

But, my brethren, time would fail to enter at any length into the history or even into the principles of Masonry, and I am also warned that amid other scenes and by skilful workmen the lessons and objects of this system may be fully inculcated and properly enforced. Let me, in conclusion, admonish you, my brethren of the Order of Free-masons, to practise as much as in you lies, all that you profess; the prejudiced and the ignorant and even the vicious are watching you, ready to comment with severity on every failure to discharge your Masonic duty—ready to triumph over (what we have sometimes to regret) positive departures from that duty.

For my own part, as a minister of Christ, let me repeat what I have said, on a similar occasion to the present, that holding my duty towards my God, my Church, and the people over whom, under God, I have been made overseer for their spiritual good, as paramount, I regard Masonry as a good Institution, and if for one moment I doubted of this, I should abandon it; if I saw it in any wise controvert my teaching or clash with my profession, I should not hesitate a moment to choose between the doctrines of Masonry and those of the Christianity, I endeavour, in dependance upon the Almighty, to teach; but as far as my Masonic knowledge extends, with the "light" I have received in Masonry, I can say of it: "For my *brethren and companions'* sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee."*

* Psalm cxxii. 8.

Above all things, my brethren, avoid slander and evil speaking one of another, cultivate peace, harmony, unity, cherish as a dear heritage the useful lessons you have received, communicated with all the sublimity that can possibly be conceived; be diligent in the discharge of the duties of benevolence and charity, when and where you may freely and fairly exercise them; remembering always that profession without practice is hypocrisy and *the heart may conceive and the head devise in vain, if the hand be not prompt to execute the design.*

Let me recommend to your earnest and attentive study the Holy Bible, "the volume of the Sacred Law"; let me urge upon you those blessed lessons, which St. John the Evangelist so replete, and with such affection, inculcated. "If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."* "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light."† "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.?"‡ "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."§

And lastly, let me urge upon all who hear me, the injunction of the Apostle in the text. Ages have rolled away since man's redemption was sealed, since the "precious corner-stone," upon which our faith is built, was laid as "a

* 1 John, i. 7.

† 1 John, ii. 10.

‡ 1 John, iii. 17.

§ 1 John, iv. 20, 21.

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sure foundation" in Zion. The faith of the Christian, once despised and refused, has triumphed over all opposition, and in the face of the direst persecution, and on through the murky darkness of heathenism, on through the mists of superstition, on through the tempestuous and storm-tost billows of life, the ark of God's mercies has braved the desolating ravages of time, and is bearing her onward course to the haven where the redeemed would be.

Let us "take heed" that our building be fixed upon the "Rock of Ages," and when human glory has faded and fame has been obliterated, when monuments of victory have perished, and all the chronicles that Time has written on the scroll of glory, have been blotted out for ever, when Earth itself, worn out, is about to be destroyed, and Nature is "to sink in years," will come the trial which will manifest the transitory nature of all things terrestrial; and out of the dimness of heaven and the chaos of earth, the strong foundations, the saving bulwarks, the indestructible towers of the spiritual temple, and our heavenly house will appear, and the work already complete and furnished will shine out amid the dissolution and wreck of Earth and Time, and Eternity's dawn will view the redeemed—will view Him of whom Zerubbabel was a type—view him when "he shall bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."*

As we look forward to that dreadful day, if we have served our Lord and Master faithfully, and if our faith and hope be fixed upon the sure foundation; if our lives have been fashioned after His who was our great pattern as He tabernacled in the flesh; and if, leaning upon His merits and reposing in His intercession, our labors being ended, we rest in Him, we

* Zechariah iv. 7.

may, all our lives long, have this sure consolation, treasured as an earnest of "the glory which shall be revealed,"* and "written not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart:"† "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."‡

STIRLING, December 14th, 1859.

* Romans viii. 18.

† 2 Cor. iii. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 1.

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District Grand Officers
FOR THE
PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT,
1859-60.

R. W. Br. I. C. FRANCK, DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER.

" " REV. JAMES A. PRESTON, DISTRICT GRAND CHAPLAIN.

" E. J. SISON, DISTRICT GRAND SECRETARY.